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Articles:

- 1) Japanese government welcomes Roos' appointment

ASAHI (Page 9) (Full)
May 29, 2009

Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura made the following comment in a press conference yesterday about President Barack Obama's appointment of lawyer John Roos as new ambassador to Japan: "The Japanese government would like to welcome (the appointment of John Roos). President Obama has especially deep trust in him. It proves that the Obama administration attaches importance to the Japan-U.S. alliance."

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- 2) Japan concerned by "lack of diplomatic experience"

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
May 29, 2009

Yasushi Takatsuka

The Japanese government is basically positive about the appointment of John Roos as ambassador to Japan, seeing him as someone who can speak directly to the President. There are some officials, however, who are concerned about Roos' lack of experience in foreign policy and security affairs.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura hailed the appointment of Roos at his news conference on May 28. He said: "(Roos) enjoys President Obama's great confidence. This is an indication of the importance he has attached to the Japan-U.S. alliance."

Former ambassador Thomas Schieffer, who is a long-time close friend of former president George Bush, was said to be "one of the ambassadors who was closest to the President." The meeting between Mrs. Sakie Yokota and other family members of abduction victims with President Bush in 2006 is said to be an achievement of Ambassador Schieffer, and the government had been hoping for an ambassador with direct connections with President Obama. Therefore, a majority in the government "welcome the appointment of a close friend-type ambassador."

However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has practically no information on Roos. With North Korea conducting a nuclear test and the heightening tension in Northeast Asia, there is also concern about "his abilities being unknown" (a senior MOFA official).

- 3) John Roos named as next envoy to Japan

SANKEI (Page 3) (Full)
May 29, 2009

Takashi Arimoto, Washington

U.S. President Obama announced his intention on May 27 to nominate John Roos, a 54-year-old California-based lawyer, to become the next U.S. ambassador to Japan. Concerning the ambassadorial post, Roos

consulted with Daniel Okimoto, who is a Japanese-American political scientist and professor emeritus at Stanford University and has been a friend of Roos for more than a quarter of a century. Okimoto told the Sankei Shimbun that Roos and Obama have "a strong relationship of mutual trust" although it has been only a short period of time since the two became acquainted with each other.

Meanwhile, Joseph Nye, a professor at Harvard University, was first seen as a likely candidate for the post of ambassador to Japan. However, the possibility that Obama might name someone who cooperated in raising funds for his election campaign started to grow stronger from around March. Okimoto revealed that Roos had been sounded out on several ambassadorial posts, including the Japan post.

"We talked about the posts," Okimoto said. "But," the professor went on, "he was interested in the post of ambassador to Japan." Okimoto recalled: "He used to have business relations with Japanese, and he

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had respect for Japan." It was about two weeks ago that Roos was formally asked by the Obama administration to accept the post, according to Okimoto.

Roos, unlike Nye, is little known in Japan and has few contacts in Japan. Former Ambassador Baker and other U.S. envoys to Tokyo were well known in the U.S. political world. However, Roos is not.

Okimoto stressed: "It might be disappointing to Japanese who had expected a big name. However, Mr. Roos not only cooperated in raising funds but also gave advice over election strategies, and he is deeply trusted by Mr. Obama. Unlike Mr. Nye, Mr. Roos has the advantage of being able to get in touch with the president directly."

Okimoto also underscored the point that Roos was born and brought up in California, which is situated right across the Pacific Ocean from Japan. He added: "Mr. Roos will probably be the first one hundred percent Californian ambassador. He is well acquainted with House Speaker Pelosi and other Congress members elected from California. He is also familiar with information technology and environmental technology. He is quite different from the former ambassadors."

Roos will leave for his Tokyo post after his designation is confirmed by the Senate. Japan-U.S. relations are currently saddled with such difficult issues as realigning U.S. forces in Japan and resolving North Korea's nuclear development and abductions. Okimoto expressed his hopes for Roos, saying: "He may not appear to be an awe-inspiring individual, but I think the Japanese people will come to understand that he is an intelligent, sincere, and trustworthy person."

4) Stanford University's Okimoto on ambassador to Japan-designate John Roos

ASAHI (Page 9) (Abridged slightly)
May 29, 2009

Yoichi Kato, Stanford, California

U.S. President Barack Obama announced on May 27 that he would appoint lawyer John Roos, 54, as new ambassador to Japan. What kind of person is John Roos? I asked Stanford University Professor Emeritus Daniel Okimoto, 60, who knows him well and has been offering him advice on Japan-U.S. relations as an expert on Japanese politics.

"I have known him over 25 years since his days at Stanford University law school. He graduated from the political science department with the highest distinction. He is an extremely capable person. Several years after completing law school, he entered a Silicon Valley law firm and is now serving as C.E.O. there. High-tech companies have been the firm's major clients."

-- Roos says that he will not give any media interviews until his appointment is formally approved. What resulted in his appointment?

"The Obama team offered Roos several positions, including the ambassador to Japan. Of them, he found the Japan assignment most attractive. He has deep respect toward Japan and the Japanese people.

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"He asked me, 'If the post is offered to me, should I accept it?' Initially, the name of Harvard University Professor Joseph Nye was mentioned as the most promising candidate, so he seemed unsure whether he would really be tipped. The president made his final decision relatively recently."

-- What about his relationship with the president?

"He is not a member of the inner circle of closest aides. He belongs to a number of friends and colleagues who are right outside that group.

"He was involved in election campaigning from an early stage through fundraising and other activities and that has helped to forge close ties with Mr. Obama. The two share the same political philosophy, such the realization of social justice. On the diplomatic front, they both aim at enhancing relations with U.S. allies, such as Japan and the European nations."

-- Some observers regard his appointment as a reward.

"I can understand such a view. But this appointment has not been decided only as a reward. Mr. Obama is not a person who makes such a decision."

-- How is Mr. Roos preparing himself for the new job?

"As a lawyer, he has Japanese clients and has a good knowledge as far as business is concerned. But I think he doesn't know much about Japan's history, culture, and society.

"But then, he is extremely capable and is eager to learn. I have already handed him several books on the economy, culture and society, including one on Japanese history written by former ambassador to Japan Edwin Reischauer. I told him, 'Let's have some discussions.'

"Whether one is in the pro-Japanese or Japan-hand camp is not relevant. What really matters is to have an eagerness to learn things free from bias."

-- What kind of ambassador do you think he will make?

"He will be able to directly speak to the president. He can also offer a new perspective on U.S.-Japan relations. He has Silicon Valley connections and expertise. I think he can serve as a bridge between the United States and Japan, including in Mr. Obama's top priority of clean technology."

5) Roos named envoy to Japan: President stresses maturity of the bilateral relationship with appointment of close friend

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
May 29, 2009

Masaya Oikawa, Washington

U.S. President Barack Obama formally announced on May 27 the appointment of lawyer John Roos, 54, as the next ambassador to Japan. Roos is an important supporter who made major contributions to the Obama campaign by raising a significant amount of donations in last year's presidential election. The appointment of a "close

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friend who can negotiate directly with the President" (in the words of a Obama administration official) instead of Harvard University

Professor Joseph Nye, 72, a Japan expert who was thought to be the favorite, is seen as an indication that the President intends to be personally managing the Japan-U.S. alliance.

The decisive factor in Roos' appointment is the personal confidence that President Obama places in him. On top of serving as the "bundler" on the California financial committee that raised millions of campaign dollars for Obama's presidential bid, Roos also was involved with setting up the Internet donation system which was instrumental in Obama's victory.

Both Obama and Roos are forward-looking and share some common beliefs.

Even before becoming the executive of a law firm in 2005, Roos had supported companies dealing in alternative energy and life sciences. He shares a common policy direction with Obama, who wants to lead the world in global warming prevention measures and other global issues, as well as in the study of embryonic stem cells.

In addition, Roos has promoted business operations based on diversity without regard for race or gender, and has been given a top award in the U.S. for this management stance. This also has something in common with Obama's political stance of giving importance to social diversity as the first African-American president. This seems to be the reason why Roos "can call the President on the phone directly" (according to a Japan-U.S. diplomatic source).

The two main types of U.S. ambassadors to Japan after World War II have consisted of scholars or diplomats who were fluent in Japanese and who were experts in Japanese affairs - such as Edwin Reischauer and Michael Armacost - and political heavyweights - such as Mike Mansfield, Walter Mondale, Thomas Foley, and Howard Baker.

This trend was broken by the previous Bush administration's appointment of Thomas Schieffer. Schieffer was a businessman who co-owned a Major League baseball team with Bush and had no connections with Japan. He was, however, a "close friend" who could talk to Bush directly on the phone and tell him what was really happening in Japan. Roos is a "Schieffer-type" (according to a State Department source).

Louis Susman, retired vice chairman of financial giant Citigroup, was also named ambassador to Britain on May 27. Like Roos, this appointment is also a "reward" for his contribution to the election campaign. Ambassadors with personal connections to the President have traditionally been appointed to the London post, so there is an opinion that the appointment of Roos is an indication of a "mature Japan-U.S. relationship" comparable to the U.S.-UK one.

According to the above Japan-U.S. diplomatic source, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had pushed for Nye as the next ambassador to Japan, but White House resisted the State Department-led ambassadorial appointment.

There is also a view that a critical point in the nomination process was the discord between Japan and the U.S. in the UN Security Council over response to North Korea's firing of a long-range missile in April. It is believed that Obama, who felt there was a

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problem in communicating with Japan, opted for Roos, in whom he has strong confidence, for this White House-led appointment.

6) Obama's Asia team takes shape; new lineup reflects emphasis on "Okinawa," "nuclear issue"

NIKKEI (Page 6) (Excerpts)
May 29, 2009

With the nomination of John Roos as the next U.S. ambassador to Japan, the Obama administration's Asia policy team has taken shape. The administration has decided to assign experts to fill the right posts at the White House, the State Department, and the Defense Department. The lineup demonstrates its aspiration to address in a

pragmatic manner such pending issues as the North Korean nuclear problem, the management of relations with China, and further development of the Japan-U.S. alliance.

Presidential Special Presidential Jeffrey Bader, Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg, and Assistant Secretary of State (for East Asia and the Pacific) Kurt Campbell support the Asia policy team. The administration has designated Bader, an expert on Chinese affairs, as coordinator, and Steinberg, who had much experience as a strategy at RAND Corporation, as responsible for mapping out a long-term vision. Meanwhile, Campbell will be in charge of implementing policies, based his relationship of trust with the two.

In working out policy toward Japan, Campbell and Assistant Secretary of Defense (for East Asia) Wallace Gregson, who retired as the commander of U.S. Marines in the Pacific, will take charge. They will be assisted by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Michael Schiffer, a junior Democrat who is said to be well versed in Japanese affairs, and State Department Japan desk director-designate Kevin Maher.

The administration aims to have this group work out measures to deal with such pending issues in Okinawa as the transfer of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station.

Under Secretary of Defense Fournoy will be in charge of defense policy, based on President Obama's nuclear-free world policy. She is expected to exert influence over entire Asia policy, including the Japan-U.S. alliance, U.S.-China relations, and issues with North Korea, together with Under Secretary of Defense Carter, who is responsible for future defense technology such as the missile defense system.

Former Defense Secretary Perry praised the Obama administration's Asia team as "a collection of able personnel." But he added: "I recommended Joseph Nye as the next ambassador to Japan." Campbell has established a suprapartisan Asia policy network with Harvard University Professor Nye, former deputy secretary of state Armitage, former presidential special assistant Mike Green (senior Asia director). This is also his strong point.

7) In UN discussion on resolution against North Korea, focus is on cargo inspection, but Japan unable to join action under existing law

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Excerpts)
May 29, 2009

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In discussion at the UN Security Council (UNSC) on a sanction resolution against North Korea's nuclear test, the focus of attention is on a measure to make cargo inspections onboard ships mandatory. This measure is aimed at obligating inspections of ships sailing between North Korea and Japan to check if they load materials that could be used to develop weapons of mass destruction. The U.S. is eager to adopt the measure, and Japan has also echoed the U.S. Under its relevant laws, however, the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) or the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) would not be able to carry out cargo inspections. Japan is likely to be pressed to make a hard decision on this measure.

Need for caution voiced

There are three laws that authorize cargo inspections by the MSDF or the JCG: (1) The Ship Inspection Operations Law; (2) the Maritime Transportation Restriction Law (restrictions of marine transportation of foreign military supplies); and (3) the Japan Coast Guard Law. The first law is applied in the case of a military attack against Japan being imminent; the second law applies in the case of Japan attacked; and the third applies in the case of a crime committed in Japanese territorial waters. A government source said that as a countermeasure to the North's latest nuclear test, "Japan is not allowed to carry out inspections under any of these laws. Amending the Ship Inspection Operations Law or the other laws is

necessary."

Many government officials, though, are calling for caution, one senior official remarking that if Japan decides to carry out cargo inspections by revising the laws, "North Korea might be upset and resort to terrorist outrages."

In actuality, when South Korea announced full-scale participation in the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) aimed at preventing the transfer and transport of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, North Korea fiercely reacted, issuing a statement noting that it would interpret it as a declaration of war and would respond to it with a military strike. Following this, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced the U.S. commitment to defending Japan and South Korea in an attempt to apply pressure to the North.

8) Russia supports Japan, U.S. proposals for DPRK sanctions; China reluctant about cargo inspections

MAINICHI (Page 1) (Full)
May 29, 2009

Takayasu Ogura, New York

The five UN Security Council (UNSC) permanent members, Japan, and South Korea will soon be going into final consultations on the proposed new resolution, drafted by Japan and the United States, to be adopted in reaction to North Korea's nuclear test. It was learned on May 28 that Russia had conveyed to Japan and the U.S. its support for the draft resolution. This was revealed by a Western diplomatic source. Russia had so far shown a certain extent of understanding to North Korea, but this time, it has sided with the West. China is now the only country with reservations. It has become highly likely that a resolution close to Japan's and the United States' position can be adopted.

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Japan and the U.S. had drawn up the draft resolution by comparing and reconciling their individual drafts and presented the finished product to the UK, France, China, Russia, and the ROK on the evening of May 27, Eastern Time in the U.S. (morning of May 28 in Japan). The main points of the draft consist of: (1) making the cargo inspections provided in Resolution 1718 (adopted in October 2006) mandatory; (2) expanding the scope of arms embargo from large weapons to weapons in general; and (3) expanding the scope of asset freezing of groups and adding new provisions on freezing assets of individuals. China has not expressed its support for the provision on making cargo inspections mandatory.

9) Lavrov: Russia is ready to discuss concrete sanctions

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 3) (Full)
May 29, 2009

Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone spoke with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on the phone yesterday to discuss a response to North Korea's nuclear test. In it, touching on a new resolution to be adopted by the UN Security Council, which is chaired by Russia, Lavrov said, "We are ready to discuss concrete sanctions."

Nakasone categorically said, "(The UNSC) should adopt a strong resolution, including additional sanctions." He also expressed Japan's desire to work closely with Russia, which currently holds the UNSC chairmanship. Lavrov replied, "There is a need to send a strong and clear message."

10) Aso, Brown agree over phone to cooperate for early adoption of UNSC resolution on North Korea

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 3) (Abridged slightly)
May 29, 2009

Prime Minister Taro Aso spoke with British Prime Minister Gordon

Brown on the phone last night, and the two confirmed a policy course of working even closer for the adoption of a new UN Security Council resolution in response to North Korea's second nuclear test. In the telephone conversation, Aso expressed his hope that China would lobby North Korea, saying, "It is important for China, which has strong influence over North Korea, to work upon that country."

The two leaders also agreed to join efforts in formulating an international framework replacing the Kyoto Protocol on global warming. Aso also emphatically indicated that Japan would come up with a decent mid-term greenhouse gas emission reduction target.

Brown asked for Japan's diplomatic efforts for the release of Burma's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

11) MSDF patrols off to Somalia waters on antipiracy mission

SANKEI (Page 5) (Abridged)
May 29, 2009

Two Maritime Self-Defense Force P-3C patrol planes yesterday took off from MSDF Atsugi Air Station in Kanagawa Prefecture to engage in airborne warning and surveillance activities against pirates in the Gulf of Aden off the eastern African coast of Somalia.

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This is the first overseas task for the MSDF's P-3C patrol planes. The two P-3C patrols will work together with two MSDF destroyers to escort Japanese ships and Japan-linked ships.

The P-3Cs will be based at an international airport in Djibouti, a neighbor of Somalia. They will provide information to the MSDF destroyers and others when they spot suspicious vessels.

The squadron is made up of about 150 members, including about 50 Ground Self-Defense Force members for P-3C security and other tasks.

12) Government to toughen exports of technology information that could be used for nuclear weapons and other WMD

YOMIURI (Top play) (Excerpt)
May 29, 2009

The government has decided to tighten controls on technology and information that could be diverted for military use, such as the development of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Under a government ordinance, universities, companies, and research bodies would be required to set up a division to control such technology and information. With illegal exports of materials to such countries as North Korea, which is developing nuclear weapons, having become a problem, it was judged that there needs to be stricter regulations, bearing in mind the possibility that illegal outflows could come from such places as universities where advanced research is carried out. This would be the first time for restrictions to be placed on information in the scientific area, based on national security.

13) Aso: Enemy base strike included in self-defense

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)
May 29, 2009

Prime Minister Taro Aso, sitting in yesterday on the House of Councillors Budget Committee, replied to a question concerning the advisability of striking enemy bases in the case where a foreign country set about making preparations to launch a ballistic missile targeted at Japan. In his reply, Aso referred to a 1956 Diet reply in which then Prime Minister Ichiro Hatoyama stated that Japan "should not wait for its ruin while doing nothing." Aso indicated that he would follow this reply. He stated: "From legal theory, it's included in the scope of self-defense that is allowed under the Constitution, and it's possible."

14) Diet session to be extended until August

The government and the ruling parties on May 28 started final adjustments in order to substantially extend the current regular Diet session, which is to recess on June 3, for more than 60 days until early August so as to ensure the passage of fiscal 2009 extra budget-related bills. A formal decision will be reached at talks by party heads of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the New Komeito and the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) on June 1. Following the move, an increasing number of ruling party members are taking the view that the general election will be extended to August or later.

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The LDP and the DPJ of the Upper House reached an agreement on the same day to take a vote on the fiscal 2009 extra budget in an Upper House plenary session, making it certain that the budget will be enacted the same day. Since a bill amending the tax code cleared the Lower House on the May 13, it can be readopted in the Lower House on July 12 or after at the latest. Key bills, including an antipiracy bill, are certain to secure Diet approval by late June.

The ruling camp intends to have bills related to the extra budget, such as an amendment to the Development Bank of Japan Law, clear the Lower House next week or later.

Given the 60-day rule, it would take until early August for those bills to secure Diet approval without fail. Since the regular Diet session can only be extended once, the government had decided to substantially extend the Diet session until early August.

However, many ruling party members hold the view that the best opportunity to dissolve the Lower House should not be missed, once the extra budget bill and other key bills pass the Diet. The predominant view regarding dissolution of the Lower House is dissolution after the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly election on July 12 and a general election in August. Another plan is to extend the Diet session until late August to retain the option to dissolve the Lower House much later.

15) DPJ to approve four extra budget-related bills

Concerning four bills, out of six fiscal 2009 extra budget-related bills, that are now under deliberation in the Lower House, the ruling parties and the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) on May 28 agreed to revise three and deal with one with as an attachment. As a result, it now seems likely that the four bills will clear the Lower House late next week with the approval of the DPJ as well. The ruling and opposition parties also agreed to take a vote on the extra budget in an Upper House plenary session on May 29. It is expected to be automatically enacted within the same day in accordance with a constitutional provision, after being voted down by opposition parties.

In connection with a bill amending the Shoko Chukin Bank Law, the meeting on May 28 decided to revise an additional clause so as to allow for suspending the overall sale of Shoko Chukin Bank stocks held by the government, giving consideration to the DPJ, which opposes overall liberalization of the bank. It has already been decided to revise amendments to the Development Bank of Japan Law and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Law. An amendment to the Law on Limitation of Shareholding by Banks and Other Financial Institutions was adopted with a decision made to incorporate the DPJ's stance into its attachment.

The DPJ is opposing the remaining two bills. The ruling parties intend to give up on the passage of legislation on special measures to deal with the crisis facing capital markets, on which the Lower House has yet to start deliberations. Tax code-related bills have already passed the Lower House.

16) Splitting up welfare and labor ministry: Prime minister gives up

on his election pledge due to opposition from government, ruling parties

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Top Play) (Full)
May 29, 2009

The government and the ruling parties on May 28 decided to put off the drafting of a specific plan to split up and reorganize the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare as ordered by Prime Minister Taro Aso until after the next Lower House election. The prime minister had intended to incorporate the plan into the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) election manifesto as a showcase policy. However, he was forced to give up on the idea due to opposition from the government and the ruling parties. The haphazard proposal he himself made will likely call into question his leadership.

Referring to the split-up and transfer of the MHLW, the prime minister on the evening of the same day told reporters at the Kantei: "I am not insisting on that from the beginning. I just suggested looking into such a possibility from the perspective of public safety and peace of mind, including the declining birthrate issue. (I did not insist on making the ministry's split-up a foregone conclusion)." He thus revealed his intention not to draft a specific plan for the time being.

The prime minister at a meeting of the government's Reassuring Society Realization Council on the 15th proposed a plan to split up part of the MHLW and the Cabinet Office and reorganize them into a social security ministry and a national livelihood ministry and ordered State Minister for Economic and Fiscal Policy Kaoru Yosano to compile a specific plan. Since then, he has been conferring on the issue with related ministers with the aim of compiling a draft before the end of the week.

However, MHLW Minister Yoichi Masuzoe said, "Such a plan should not be implemented in a hasty manner." A number of other related ministers and ruling party members also opposed the proposal. The prime minister had proposed the unification of jurisdiction over nurseries and kindergartens, which is now divided between the MHLW and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), as well. MEXT Minister Ryu Shionoya has been opposing the proposal.

Following this situation, Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura and State Minister for Administrative Reform Akira Amari on the 28th met with Koki Chuma, chief of the LDP's Administrative Reform Promotion Headquarters at the party headquarters and discussed how to deal with the situation. They decided to put off the drafting of a concrete plan until after the Lower House election.

ZUMWALT